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Comparative studies on various men led self-help groups in traditional cultivation of sericulture: A report from West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

The present study demonstrated the importance of community-based approach in education and public awareness programs in a catastrophic management and the role of stakeholders. Community members are the possible victims, and their experiences in the region are best examples, including its terrain, risks and vulnerabilities. Community members must be called for planning and implementation phases of these awareness programs as it is going to help them in managing the extreme situations. The present study also talks about various methods which communities can use to actively implement community based action plans to reduce catastrophic dangers as well as to identify and compare the benefits and demerits of a community-based approach to education and public awareness. It finally explores new information on characteristics indicating disasters which may arise in future.

Introduction:

As India aspires to progress the status of a developing to a developed nation in the new millennium, it becomes imperative to involve the youth in the mainstream of national development as active participants. Youth must become responsible and productive citizens in modern times and technologically sound in current scenario (Pati, 2007). India is the largest country in South Asia. The government of India is not able to provide financial assistances and strong economic platforms in all sectors. In traditional societies, there are some norms where families and friends have been providing social support. However, in modern industrial society; family and community ties are often disrupted due to mobility and other social changes. Therefore, people often choose to join with others who share mutual interests and concerns. It has been estimated that there are at least 500,000 to 750,000 groups with 10 million to 15 million participants in the United States (Katz, 1993) and that more than thirty self-help centers and information clearing houses have been established (Borman, 1992). West Bengal is one of the state in India where state government emphasis on SHGs to upgrade their socioeconomic status.

Self-Help Groups:

Self-help groups, also known as mutual help, mutual aid, or support groups, or groups that provide mutual support to each other. This mutual help is based on a goal to help each other towards finding a solution for a given problem and try to recover in a sustainable manner. SHG is a small group of about 20 persons from a homogeneous class, who come together voluntarily to attain certain collective goals, social or economic. The group is democratically formed and elects its own leaders. Their aims should include economic welfare of all members. The non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have traditionally had a history of promoting SHGs. However, over time, SHGs have come to be promoted by Government agencies, banks and also by federations of SHGs themselves.

Formation of Men Self-Help Groups:

Women Self-help groups were formed originally for social empowerment. Men/Youth Self-help groups are based on economic empowerment as their primary focus. Therefore, the focus is on skill training towards increasing their employability and promotion of economic activities. The ideal size of SHG is 10-20 members. A smaller size is preferred because in a big group, members cannot

participate actively. Only one person from one family can become a member of a SHG. A group of either men or women is formed. A mixed group is generally not preferred. It is important that the members have a common social and financial background. For example, the group may be of farmers, artisans, craftsmen, housemaids, mill workers etc.

The Salient features of Men/Youth SHGs:

- Groups will be formed based on economic activities.
- Skill training will be imparted to increase employability and to promote self-employment.
- Exposure visits will be arranged to expose youth.
- Their accounts and proceeding are maintained by the leader and leader is selected or elected among the group members.
- This group creates self-help, awareness and economic and social empowerment to the poor.

Establishment of SGSY (Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana):

Before SGSY, six programmes were already launched viz. IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme in 1980), TRYSEM (Training of Rural Youth for Self

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Employment), DWCRA (Development of Women & Children in Rural Areas in 1982) and one million well Yojna, Ganga Kalyan Yojna and SITRA (Supply of Improve Toolkits to Rural Artisans). These programmes could not make satisfactory results for enriching the desired purpose. To rectify the situation Government decided to restructure the self-employment programmes. A new programme known as “Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana” (SGSY), is a developmental initiative launched by the Government of India to provide sustainable income to poorest of the poor people living in rural areas of the country. The scheme was launched on April 1, 1999 (Wikipedia). Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana aims at establishing a large number of micro enterprises in the rural areas, building upon the potential of the rural poor. It is rooted in the belief that rural poor in India have competencies & given the right support can be successful producers of valuable goods/ services.

Features of SGSY:

- Training and capacity building of the rural youths for identified categories and generating the awareness of the programme through wide publicity so that active participation can be ensured.
- The selections of beneficiaries from the mass pool of rural youth is utmost

important to make this programme a great success.

- Training components includes the personality development through inculcating soft skills.
- Identified the jobs which correlates with the training imparted.
- Maintaining the track records of the placed rural youths with bare minimum period of months so that problems with employer or other odds can be surfaced out.
- Exploring the further new opportunities in the Industries through keeping close eyes on the market so that weed out can be accommodated.
- Maintain the data of these youth through well designed website which incorporate the individual details. The training imparted to these youths should be certified by known certifying agencies (Ministry of rural development).

Objectives of SGSY:

The objectives of these special projects would be to ensure a time bound programme for bringing a specific number of below poverty line (BPL) families above the poverty line through integrated approach. The implementation of the project may involve different strategies to provide long term sustainable opportunities in terms of rural poor and

combination of various strategies like provision of support infrastructure, technology, marketing, training and so on. SGSY will particularly focus on the vulnerable groups among the rural poor. Accordingly, the SC/ST's will account for at least 50% of the swarozgaris, women for 40% and the disabled for 3%. 15% of the funds under SGSY will be set apart at the national level for projects having a for reaching significance which can also act as indicators of possible alternative strategies to be taken up in conjunction with other departments of semi-government or international organizations. This would include initiatives to be taken in the individual districts or across the districts.

a) List of Self-Help Groups in various Districts under SGSY (up to 2004), District Rural Development Cell, Govt of W.B.: -

Bankura	3464
Birbhum	1728
Burdwan	4273
Coach Bihar	3138
South Dinajpur	1657
Darjeeling	792

Hoogly	2388
Howrah	1701
Jalpaiguri	3169
Malda	2076
Purba Medinipur	10734
West Medinipur	15402
Murshidabad	3104
Nadia	2322
Uttar 24 pargana	5354
Puruliya	1894
Siliguri	820
South 24 pargana	8387
Uttar Dinajpur	630
Total	73033

Target Groups:

Following Self-help groups of Birbhum district, Block-Lohapur & Murshidabad district, Block-Nabagram are studied to find out the current status of sericultural men led Self-help groups. The groups are:

- I. Sarbamongla Swanirvar group.
- II. Brahmoni Swanirvar group.
- III. Alya Swanirvar froup.
- IV. Asha Swanirvar group

- V. Tarani Swanirvar group
- VI. Mamoni Swanirvar group
- VII. Arani Swanirbhar group
- VIII. Rimi Sericulture Swanirvar group

Materials and Methods:

A Study was carried out in two traditional districts of West Bengal. viz Murshidabad & Birbhum, 12 Self-help groups of men in Titidanga of Birbhum, Khordighi of Murshidabad, and Balashpur of Murshidabad and Sollapara of Murshidabad were studied.

Parameters of the study were:

- 1) Educational level of men engaged in sericultural activities in self-help groups.
- 2) Socio-economic status of men engaged in sericultural activities in Self-help groups.
- 3) Different aspects of silk reeling in Self-help groups.

Parameters were collected through structured questionnaire, personal interaction between the responce & the investigator. Data was collected from the DRDC, Govt. official both central and states, various NGO's and co-operative engaged in sericultural activities. Purposefully random sampling method is followed for collecting the data. Data pertaining to the related topic was collected by personally interviewing with

the aid of design questionnaire (Ray, G.L. & Mandal S.1997).

Comparative results between groups:

NAME OF THE GROUP	LITERATE PERSONS	MARRIED PERSONS	CHILDREN MORE THAN 4	GENERAL CASTE	NUCLEAR FAMILY
Sarbamangala Swanirvar Group	72.72%	100%	54.95%	100%	90.90%
Brahmoni Swanirvar Group	60%	100%	50%	100%	80%
Alya Swanirvar Group	45.45%	90.90%	50%	100%	81.81%
Asha Swanirvar Group	70%	100%	10%	100%	100%
Tarani Swanirvar Group	25%	87.50%	25%	87%	100%
Mamoni Swanirvar Group	100%	0%	20%	100%	100%
Arani Swanirvar Group	100%	87.50%	15%	0%	12.5%
Rimi Sericulture Swanirvar Group	100%	83.33%	25%	100%	83.33%

Discussion on Table.1:

Among the eight groups under study, It was observed that maximum number of literates were present in Mamoni Swanirvar Group, Arani Swanirvar Group & Rini Swarnivar Group (100%), following Sarbamangala Swanirvar Group (72.72%), Asha Swanirvar Group (70%), Brahmoni Swanirvar Group (60%) & Alya Swanirvar Group (45.45%). In respect of marital status; Swarbamangala, Brahmoni, Asha Swanirvar Groups scored 100%, and rest of groups were Aiya Swanirvar Group (90.90%), Tarani Swanirvar Group (87.50%), Arani Swanirvar Group (83.33%) and Mamoni Swanirvar Group (0%). In comparison of more than four (4) children in a family; Sarbamangala Swanirvar Group occupies first position (54.95%) and rest are Brahmoni Swanirvar Group (50%), Alya Swanirvar Group (50%), Tarini and Rimi Sericulture Group (25%), Mamoni Swanirvar Group (20%), Arani Swanirvar Group (15%), Asha Swanirvar Group (10%). All members of six group's viz. Sarbamangala Swanirvar Group, Brahmoni Swanirvar Group, Alya Swanirvar Group, Asha Swanirvar Group, Mamoni Swanirvar Group, Rimi Sericulture Swanirvar Group are general in cast. There are no general cast in Aroni Swanirvar Group but Tarani Swanirvar Group consists of 87% general cast

member. Comparison of eight family statuses revealed, three families viz Asha, Mamoni, Tarini Swanirvar Group are 100% nuclear in nature.

Discussion on Table.2:

Swabamagala Swanirvar Group consisted of 11 members. 18.18% and 54.55% members of this group live in brick built and tiled roof house, rest of 27.27% live in thatched roof house. It was observed that they earn 1500 per month. Almost 72.72% of member of the group are having land less than 1 acre. 10.45% members of this group are not involved in communication activities like they neither listen radio nor watch T.V. All the members of this group were involved in charkha reeling.

Brahmoni Swanirvar Group consisted of 10 members. Most of the members of this group were above 30 years old. 10% members of this group live in brick built house, 70% are living in tiled roof and remaining 20% are living in thatched roof houses respectively. 90% members earn 1500 per month. Almost 70% of people in this group are having less than 1 acre land. 10.20% of members of this group are not involved in communication activities like they neither listen radio nor watch T.V. All the members of this group are using

NAME OF THE GROUP	STRUCTURE OF ROOF			INCOME RS 1500/MONTH	LAND HOLDING CAPACITY(<1ACRE)	ENTERTAINMENT	CHARK REELING
	Brick built house	Tiled roof	Thatched roof				
Sarbamangala Swanirvar Group	18.18	54.55	27.27	100%	72.72%	10.45% have no facilities	100%
Brahmoni Swanirvar Group	10	70	20	95%	70%	10.20% have no facilities	100%
Alya Swanirvar Group	27.27	36.36	36.36	100%	45.45%	8.65% have no facilities	100%
Asha Swanirvar Group	20	50	30	100%	70%	8% have no facilities	100%
Tarani Swanirvar Group	25	50	25	100%	50%	7.42% have no facilities	100%
Mamoni Swanirvar Group	00	63.64	36.36	100%	100%	8.50% have no facilities	100%
Arani Swanirvar Group	66.67	33.33	00	100%	0%	6% have no facilities	100%
Rimi Sericulture Swanirvar Group	8.33	41.67	50	16.67%, Rest Above 1500 but not more than 3000	75%	10% have no facilities	100%

charka for reeling, sundrying for stifling and open system for cooking.

Alya Swanirvar Group consisted of 11 members. 27.27%, 36.36% and 36.36% members of this group live in brick built house, tiled roof house and thatched roof house respectively. Income is 1500 per month. 45.45% people of this group are having less than 1 acre land. 8.63% people of this group were not involved in communication activities like they neither listen radio nor watch T.V. Members of this group are using charkha for reeling, sundrying for stifling and open system for cooking.

Asha Swanirvar Group consisted of 10 members. 100% number of this group belong to nuclear family. 20% members of this group are living in brick built house and 50%, 30% are living in tiled roof and thatched roof house. Income of the group is approximately Rs.1500 per month. Almost 70% member of this group are having land less than 1 acre. 8% member of this group neither listened radio nor they were watching T.V. All the members were using charkha for reeling, sundrying for stifling and open system for cooking.

Tarani Swanirvar Group consisted of 8 members. 25%, 50% and 25% members in this group live in brick built house, tiled and thatched roof house. Income was Rs.

1500 per month. Almost 50% members of this group were having land less than 1 acre. 7.42% member of this group were neither listening radio nor watching T.V. All the members were using charkha for reeling, sun drying for stifling and open system for cooking.

Mamoni Swanirvar Group consisted of 11 members. 63.64% and 36.36% members of this group were living in tiled roof and thatched roof house. No one was living in brick built house. Income of the group is approximately Rs-1500 per month. All the members of this group were having land less than 1 acre. 91.5% members of this group were listening radio and few of them watching T.V. All the members were using charkha for reeling, sun drying for stifling and open system for cooking.

Arani swanirvar Group consisted of 6 members. 66.67% members of this group were having thatched roof and 33.33% members of this group were having tiled roof. No one was having thatched roof house. Income of the group was approximately Rs-1500 per month. All the members of this group had no land. 6% members of this group were not listening radio and watching T.V. The members of this group were making chandraki and rearing tray.

Rimi Sericulture Swanirvar Group consisted of 12 members. 8.33% members of this group were living in brick built house and rest of 41.67% and 50% were living in tiled roof and thatched roof houses respectively. Income of 83.33% families of this group was Rs. 1501-3000 per months and 16.67% members of this group earned around 1500 per month. Almost 75% members of this group were having land less than 1 acre. 10% members of this group were listening radio and watching T.V. All the members were using charkha for reeling, sun drying for stifling and open system for cooking.

Few members of above discussed groups were using normal and smart mobile phones for fulfilment of their daily necessities related to communication.

CONCLUSION:

The present study has demonstrated the importance of self-help groups. In West Bengal we studied the role of some self-help groups and compared these groups on the ground of their land holding capacity, education, and socio-economic status. Sericulture is cottage based and labour intensive profitable industry. So due to high profit of this industry engagement of self-help groups is being increased day by day. Men involvement is a kind of achievement of the self-help groups. Intense performances of groups show

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healthy profits which motivate others to make such group. In addition working together for employment generation was found to build unity and self confidence among the participants.

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